

A report prepared for the
USAID Local Government Reform Project
Development Alternatives, Inc.
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In collaboration with
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ZELS Policy and Procedures Manual
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Purpose of the Manual

This manual describes the organization of ZELS and its policies and procedures.

ZELS is a voluntary organization of the municipalities of Macedonia. Currently, there are 124 municipalities within Macedonia. All are eligible to become members of ZELS upon payment of the annual membership fee.

The governance of ZELS is composed of its members. A Standing Committee of 30 persons, equally divided between Mayors of Municipalities and Presidents of local elected municipal councils, has the responsibility for overall policy leadership and direction of the operations of ZELS. An Executive Director and supporting staff are responsible for the day-to-day execution of the policies and programs determined by the Standing Committee.

ZELS is a non-profit organization organized under the Laws of Macedonia. In accordance with those Laws, ZELS has adopted a set of By-Laws which constitutes its legal framework. The offices of the association are in Skopje at Naum Naumovski Borce 58.

Alan Beals, on behalf of USAID Local Government Reform Program
November 2003

Chapter One – Standing Committee

The ZELS Standing Committee is the highest policy making authority. It is composed of 30 members, 15 members are Mayors, chosen at one of the annual meetings of all mayors and 15 members are Presidents of Municipal Councils chosen at one of the annual meetings of all presidents of municipal councils. All members serve for a four - year term. Three officers, a President, a First Vice president and a Second Vice President are chosen from among the members of the Standing Committee.

Role of the President

- a. The President of ZELS shall be the chief, volunteer, elected officer.
- b. The President provides leadership to the Standing Committee, who set policy and to whom the Executive Director is accountable. The President is a partner with the Executive Director in achieving the organization's mission.
- c. The President encourages the Standing Committee's role in strategic planning and helps guide and mediate Standing Committee actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns.
- d. The President shall make all appointments of committees and task forces, in consultation with the Standing Committee. The President shall also serve as an ex officio member of all committees and task forces, and shall attend meetings as necessary.
- e. The President discusses issues confronting the organization with the Executive Director and reviews with the Executive Director any issues of concern to the

- Standing Committee. The President monitors operational performance, financial planning and financial reports.
- f. The President formally evaluates the performance of the Executive Director and informally evaluates the effectiveness of Standing Committee members. The President evaluates annually the performance of the organization in achieving its mission.
 - g. The President plays a leading role in membership development and fundraising
 - h. The President performs other responsibilities as assigned by the Board.

Role of the Standing Committee

- a. The members of the Standing Committee are expected to regularly attend meetings.
- b. Members may be appointed to one of the working policy committees and are expected to make a serious commitment to participate actively in committee work. The members stay informed about committee matters, prepare themselves well for meetings and review and comment on minutes and reports. Members are expected to function in a collegial manner that contributes to consensus.
- c. Standing Committee members are an active participant in ZELS annual evaluation and planning efforts.
- d. The Standing Committee approves the annual budget and controls the investment policies and management of capital or reserve funds.
- e. The Standing Committee adopts the membership dues for ZELS.
- f. The Standing Committee selects an independent auditor to conduct an annual review of ZELS financial affairs. The auditor makes the report directly to the Standing Committee for their approval.
- g. Standing Committee members participate in membership development and fund raising for the agency. Members represent the organization to individuals, the public and other organizations and keep the president informed on any concerns that may be expressed.
- h. The Standing Committee is responsible for the selection, compensation and, if necessary, dismissal of the president, and to assure regular evaluation of the president's performance.

Role of First Vice President

- a. The First Vice president shall preside over the meetings of the Standing Committee and otherwise represent the organization in the absence of the President.
- b. The First Vice President shall serve as the Chair of the ZELS Budget and Audit Committee.
- c. The First Vice president shall undertake such assignments as may be designated by the President

Role of Second Vice President

- a. The Second Vice president shall preside over the meetings of the ZELS Standing Committee in the absence of the President and the First Vice President and represent the organization in the absence of those two positions.
- b. The Second Vice President shall serve as the Chair of the ZELS By-laws Committee.
- c. The Second Vice president shall undertake such additional assignments as may be designated by the President.

Meetings and Attendance

It is expected that all elected members of the Standing Committee will regularly attend meetings.

Members are expected to notify the Executive Director when they are unable to attend scheduled meetings. If members are not active or fulfilling their responsibilities they may be requested to step down from Standing Committee membership prior to completion of the term in order for other members to serve.

Appendix A contains a sample letter to determine interest in serving.

The Budget and Audit Committee Duties and Responsibilities

The Budget and Audit Committee is an important committee of ZELS.

- The Second Vice President of ZELS shall serve as the Chair of this committee
- Working with the Executive Director, the Chair and the committee will be responsible for the preparation of the annual budget, the establishment of proper accounting procedures for the handling of ZELS funds and developing regular reports for the Standing Committee.
- The Chair and the committee will make recommendations to the Standing Committee on the appointment of an Auditor to conduct an annual audit of the finances of ZELS.

The Executive Director and Staff

The Standing Committee of ZELS appoints a President who directs all activities of the organization, subject to policies of the Standing Committee. The Executive Director serves without vote as an ex officio member of the Standing Committee.

The Executive Director shall employ and may terminate the employment of members of the staff necessary to carry on the work of the agency and fix their compensation within the approved budget. The Executive Director shall define the duties of staff, supervise their performance, establish their titles and delegate those responsibilities of management as shall be in the best interest of the agency. These responsibilities are more fully explained in the ZELS Human Resources Manual.

Chapter Two – Policy Development Process

Creation and Dissolution of Committees

The President and Executive Director are responsible for monitoring actions of committees and task forces of ZELS and recommending to the Standing Committee on a regular basis the creation, dissolution and consolidation of these bodies.

Role of Policy Committees-

Purpose

The following tasks are assigned to each of the ZELS Policy Committees within its assigned jurisdiction

- Develop policy recommendations in its assigned jurisdiction
- Develop legislative proposals when necessary
- Monitor the legislative, regulatory activity and local implementation
- Coordinate and liaise with ministries and other bodies, as appropriate
- Develop guidelines for local implementation of laws
- Plan and conduct public awareness and media campaigns
- Identify and conduct analytical, research and survey needs
- Evaluate the operational effectiveness of laws

Current Policy Committees, name and functional responsibility

Committee on Finance – February 2002

Committee of Spatial Planning and Building Permits – February 2002

Committee on Sports and Culture – February 2002

Committee of Education – February 2002

Committee on Health –

Committee on Economic Development -

Committee on Communal Services –

Committee on Territorial Division – November 2002

Committee on Legal Affairs –

Committee on ZELS Fair –

Committee on Skopje Law –November 2003

Membership on Policy Committees

Each member municipality of ZELS shall be entitled to nominate one or more members to the ZELS policy committees. The term of office shall be for one year.

ZELS will annually send a memorandum to the mayors of all members requesting their nominees for the policy committees. The communication will list the policy jurisdiction of each committee and the responsibilities of participation. These responsibilities will be to:

- Regularly attend meetings
- Pay the expenses of attendance
- Serve as a communications link to other elected officials at home

The President shall submit a list of the proposed members to each policy committee to be approved by the Standing Committee no later than January of each year.

A Sample Committee Appointment letter is found in Appendix B (To be added)

Role of Policy Staff Coordinators

SUBSTANTIVE

- Prepare draft of meeting agenda in consultation with Chair
- Prepare and assemble policy options and materials relevant to committee meeting agenda
- Conduct research on committee priorities and prepare problem statements, policy options and preliminary discussion points
- Draft Policy Statements for consideration
- Following committee meetings, finalize policy statements for chair concurrence and presentation to Standing Committee for Action
- Prepare accurate minutes of meetings with all action items noted, for Chair concurrence and submission to committee members
- Liaise with technical committee members and oversee activities assigned to technical committee members
- Liaise with other NGO's with policy interests similar to committee jurisdiction, and coordinate their technical and policy involvement when appropriate to committee actions

LOGISTICAL

- Assure committee agenda, minutes of previous meeting, worksheets, policy and other supporting materials are sent to members in a timely manner
- Make arrangements and assure meeting rooms are properly prepared

Role of Technical sub-committees

Technical sub-committees shall be appointed for each of the ZELS Policy Committees.

The technical sub-committees shall be composed of knowledgeable persons who may assist the policy committee members in the preparation of recommendations. The persons to serve in this capacity maybe technical experts and department heads from within municipal government, representatives of ZELS affiliate organizations, and representatives from non-governmental organizations able to contribute to the policy deliberations.

The numbers of technical representatives may vary depending on the needs of the policy committees and will not serve fixed terms.

The technical representatives may be requested to identify needed research agenda or undertake specific studies and analysis as assigned by the Standing Committee or by the Chair of the policy committee of jurisdiction. For example, in January 2003, the ZELS Standing Committee charged each technical sub-committee with the responsibility to prepare a set of recommendations for an operational transition plan in the decentralization of functions before their sub-committee and to regularly report back.

GUIDELINES TO POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND STAFF ON FRAMING POLICY STATEMENTS

COMMITTEE WORK

There are various ways to present material for the consideration of the policy committees and the desired policy outcomes.

ZELS should strive to have a set of policies in place that will promote the best interests of municipalities in each of their spheres of responsibility, current and proposed (ie. Decentralization).

Committees should strive to have at least a set of guiding principles for all proposed actions. This may take the form of problem statements in the subject field. It may take the form of a set of goals and objectives to be achieved. It may take the form of detailed actions to be undertaken by government. It may include all three: problem statement, goals of the policy and specific, detailed actions.

On occasions, initiatives may come from external sources, such as central government ministries, or parliamentary committees. Drafts of policy statements or specific pieces of legislation may have to be addressed in detail and in short time frames. Committees may have to state their policy reactions in general terms, or identify those issues which can be answered by existing ZELS policies and/or immediate responses. For example.."ZELS agrees with this statement... for the following reasons :1,2,3,4... OR... "ZELS agrees with (this) proposal or does not agree with this proposal..."

In some cases a short time frame may require that the committee and ZELS can only provide general policy principles, but leave open the possibility for more detailed and specific responses as soon as they can be developed.

In some cases it may be necessary for a policy committee to prepare a specific draft of legislation sufficient for introduction into the parliamentary process. This may require the use of legal and other technical resources to assure a quality product.

PRESENTATION OF POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

When decisions are made by the policy committees, ALL policy recommendations must be as complete as possible and in WRITING. The staff should assure that statements are exactly as the members agreed upon and that statements are approved by the Chair of the committee prior to being forwarded to the Standing Committee for final action. Proposals for Standing Committee agenda should be completed in time for inclusion in the agenda book and the notice to Standing Committee members of the next scheduled meeting.

Standing committee members shall have all policy and related proposals in writing for final action. When statements are amended by Standing Committee action, the minutes shall reflect the revised language in its entirety.

All policy statements when approved by the Standing Committee shall be compiled in a separate document by subject category to provide a continuing record of the full policy objectives of ZELS. The amended and complete policy positions of ZELS will be published at the end of each year and transmitted to all members.

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO SERVE ON GOVERNMENT BODIES, WORKING GROUPS AND OTHER ADVISORY CAPACITIES AS REPRESENTATIVES OF ZELS

ZELS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Macedonia which provides for a process of continuing consultation on policy and administrative matters affecting the relationships and governance policy issues of the municipalities. As a part of that MOU, ZELS is frequently requested to appoint municipal representatives to serve on government working groups, ministry advisory panels, and the like. These appointments are a high honor and the persons selected are expected to represent the interest of the municipalities of Macedonia to the fullest extent by participating actively and reporting regularly on the activities of their advisory bodies.

It is especially important the ZELS Policy committees have regular and timely communication from the appointees, so that any policy consequences may be affected in ZELS policy. It is equally important that the ZELS policy Chair be aware of the appointments and provide the appointee with the official ZELS policies that may be appropriate to the appointee advisory capacity. It may be necessary for the appointee to regularly brief, both in writing and orally, the full members of the policy committee on the nature of the issues and policies being discussed in the ministries and working groups of government.

The staff coordinators of policy committees should be aware of appointments to government advisory and working groups and assist in the facilitation of committee information.

Chapter Three – Travel Policies

ZELS Policy on Delegates to Out of Country Meetings

Policy: It is in the best interest of the cities of Macedonia to be represented at different international and regional organizations of cities. ZELS is frequently asked to nominate or appoint city officials to be official representatives at these meetings.

Currently, ZELS is asked to nominate delegates to meetings of the Council of Europe, representatives to national meetings of associations in other countries and various donor meetings.

ZELS will follow these criteria when making their nominations or appointments.

Criteria:

1. ZELS will make recommendations or appointments of delegates to assure the widest degree of participation among elected officials from member cities.

2.ZELS will only nominate elected officials from member cities whose dues are paid in full. This rule will apply even to those invitations where the host or donor is paying the full expenses.

3.In situations where ZELS is making a recommendation to a central ministry, and the central ministry may substitute a different name, ZELS is under no further financial or support obligation to a substitute or alternate.

4.In situations where one or multiple representatives are requested for a duration longer than a week, ZELS will recognize an appointment for up to a year. At the end of a year, ZELS will evaluate whether an appointment will be continued based on attendance and participation of the representatives.

5.In situations where ZELS is underwriting partial or the full cost of representative expenses, the representative will provide copies of the meeting agenda, documents distributed and a written report summarizing the lessons learned from the meeting or the session attended.

6.In situations where donors are paying basic expenses for delegates nominated by ZELS to attend a conference or meeting, ZELS is under no obligation to supplement additional costs or expenses.

3.2-Mileage Reimbursement (to be added)

3.3-Per Diem (to be added)

3.4-Travel; Advances (to be added)

Chapter Four – Membership

Full Members

Any municipality in Macedonia is entitled to become a member of ZELS upon payment of the annual membership fee.

The annual membership fee, or dues, is established by the Standing Committee of ZELS and may be adjusted from time to time as necessary.

The current membership fee was established in (date) and is:

(Insert Fee Schedule)

Each member municipality is entitled to one vote at official meetings of ZELS

Affiliate Members

Professional associations of municipal employees are encouraged to become affiliate members of ZELS. A Memorandum of Understanding will be concluded between ZELS and the proposed affiliate organization and approved by the Standing Committee. The

guiding principles, expectations of each party and benefits of affiliation will be listed in the Memorandum. The following are illustrative of the considerations:

- The proposed affiliate will not publicly take policy positions in conflict with adopted ZELS policy.
- The proposed affiliate may be represented at ZELS Standing Committee and other official meetings as non-voting members to provide opinions and technical advice where warranted.
- The proposed affiliate may serve and appoint representatives to serve as members of the technical sub-committees.
- Each party will acknowledge the “affiliate” relationship in their various publications.

The Association of Finance Officers (AFO) was recognized with a Memorandum of Understanding on 29 June 2000.

Associate Members

Businesses, non-profit organizations, citizen groups and academic institutions may become Associate Members of ZELS upon approval by the Standing Committee and payment of the membership dues. Associate Members do not have the right to a formal vote in ZELS organization affairs.

The fee schedule for Associate Members is:

(insert)

APPENDIX

A. CHAPTER TWO

ZELS DRAFT LETTER TO STANDING COMMITTEE NON-ATTENDEES – 29_10_02

Date

Dear (name of mayor, council president)

This is a very exciting time for ZELS as the representative of the cities of Macedonia. We are looking forward to achieving many of our longstanding objectives in the next several months.

The Standing Committee of ZELS is the representative policy and governing body of the organization. It is a 30-member body with half representing mayors and half representing presidents of city councils. The term of office for a member of the Standing Committee is currently four years. Two years have past since your original selection.

In the past year the ZELS Standing Committee has held ten regular meetings, virtually every month. We expect to have a similar schedule this coming year. It is our expectation that all members will attend each meeting although we recognize that there may be situations where members may have conflicts, limitations or other legitimate reasons for being excused. We would like to know when members are unable to attend as we have certain quorum requirements that legally have to be met.

As we prepare for the coming year, we note that you have been unable to attend (m)any of the Standing Committee meetings during the past year. It maybe that there were legitimate reasons for your inability to attend. On the other hand, it may be that this is not a responsibility that you are able to undertake or discharge at this time. If that is the case, we have other local officials who are willing to undertake this responsibility.

Therefore, I would like to know your intentions and ability to participate in future meetings. If I do not receive a response within the next 30 days, we will assume that you are unable to fill this position as a member of the Standing Committee and will move forward with an alternative.

Thank you for your service in the past and your continuing interest in ZELS.

Cordially,

President

APPENDIX B

POLICY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT LETTER

(to be added)